

SUMMARY OF MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION ON
21 OCTOBER 1962

Mr. Lundahl presented an intelligence briefing on the military situation in Cuba based on the latest information.

Following the intelligence briefing, there was an extended discussion of the decisions facing the United States Government. E asked first about JCS planning and he was told of the contingent plan involving a blockade, an air strike against the missile sites, and possibly an invasion. E said he understood we were considering one action which was a blockade accompanied by continuous surveillance so that at the first sign of getting ready to fire a missile, we would take such action as would be necessary. E also understood that there was a course of action being considered which would involve a warning and a blockade.

There was discussion of the OAS situation. E believed that we should not attack the missile sites unless we were prepared to invade and occupy the island. He thought that a simple strike without following up would require the job to be done again. E also thought that to attack by surprise would make surprise attack respectable.

E considers that on the basis of the evidence they are establishing a very definite threat and not simply demonstrating a capacity to build a bas. (There was a brief discussion of the military action in April, 1961.)

E stated that when you enter a course of action such as was being considered it must be successful. E said that he really thought that invasion was best. E said that the situation required that everybody he could ^{get} hold of on his side of the political fence should be told that they must be very careful what they said about Cuba at this time. E reviewed the courses of action and believed that there were real disadvantages in involving the OAS.

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E reverted to his point that if the OAS went along with the required two-thirds majority vote that would be satisfactory. If the OAS would not go along then we should retain our freedom of action. He said the same situation applied in the United Nations where the issue would be debated for some time.

E pondered the proposition that action might provoke an attack by the USSR. He concluded that the Soviets were much too interested in preserving their worldly goods and position and would not let anything start from Cuba because Cuba would be easily obliterated. E defined the basic problem as how do we live with the consequences of taking this action in view of all the things which the Government has said but done nothing about. E said that the American people were uneasy and that he was asked constantly about Cuba. As far as the USSR was concerned, he thought that Khrushchev might be a little tougher in negotiations but that he won't start a global war until he has decided he can win. E again stated that the third course of action had the most advantages and least disadvantages but that in any case we can no longer temporize and say things that we do not mean. He said that we should keep the OAS and the United Nations informed of every step but we should not stop any action until we have achieved our objective. E stated that if they want to bust up the United Nations, then we should take up their passports and tell them to leave. E saw no comparison between the Turkish situation and the Cuban situation, for example, stating that our activities have always been open and in free alliance and that we had never tried to arm someone secretly to start an aggressive war.

E said that as a soldier and not taking the international political scene into consideration, he would be for an all-out surprise attack and invasion. However, he said he would accept the third course of action so long as we kept the initiative in our own hands. E suggested we hold any statement until we're ready to move.

E asked that his views not be transmitted as yet except for the general statement that the second or third courses of action were preferable to the first (air strike alone). He stressed that he had not had the benefit of consultation or intelligence.